

Networking

Networking is the best way to find a good job. How does this help? Well, there are many scenarios you can imagine. For example:

An employer tells an employee they will be hiring someone to fill a position. The employee tells her job-seeking friend that the position is open and gives a good reference.

An employee sees a job posted at his company or a partner company and tells his job-seeking friend about it.

A job seeker applies for a job and a friend who knows the employer makes a recommendation.

A job seeker is at a party and meets someone who works in her industry. She lets her new acquaintance know she is looking for a job. The acquaintance agrees to have lunch with her to talk about opportunities at his firm.

The best way to begin networking is to start with the people you know. Ask them if they know anyone you can contact about a specific type of job. Contact these “referrals.” When you meet with the referrals, ask them for referrals.

Try “cold calling.” You can contact people you don’t know and ask for informational interviews. You can also join or attend conferences and workshops sponsored by professional organizations to meet more people.

To get the most out of networking, you should do more than just let people know you are looking for a job. You should intentionally build relationships with people you think will be able to help you. You should ask for their

advice, ask if they know people you can contact, ask them if they have heard of any job opportunities. You don’t have to feel like you are “using” the people you network with because you may be asked to help them in the future. This is networking.

Word of mouth is the most common way that networking can help you find a job, but there is a new way of networking that is emerging. People are networking for jobs on social networking web sites such as Facebook and on sites created to help people network for jobs such as LinkedIn. You may want to include these options as part of your networking strategy.

It is important to make a list of contacts. When you contact a referral, introduce yourself, state your purpose and request a meeting. Prepare a list of questions for the meeting. Ask referrals if they know other people you can contact. Write thank you notes and keep a log of your contacts. It would be embarrassing to hear from someone and not be able to remember them.

Why do firms recruit like this? Don’t we all feel more comfortable and confident when we have a referral? Many firms like to hire people using this same strategy. A personal referral is perceived as a good way to hire people. It saves time and money to hire based on a personal recommendation.

Good networking is beneficial to all parties because you get a job, the employer gets an employee, and you have built a professional relationship. ☺

